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FM AMEMBASSY PORT AU PRINCE
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 3368
INFO RUEHZH/HAITI COLLECTIVE
RUEHBR/AMEMBASSY BRASILIA 1084
RUEHSA/AMEMBASSY PRETORIA 0929
RUEHQU/AMCONSUL QUEBEC 0494
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S/CRS
SOUTHCOM ALSO FOR POLAD
STATE PASS AID FOR LAC/CAR
INR/IAA (BEN-YEHUDA)
WHA/EX PLEASE PASS USOAS

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR DISCUSSES DEPORTEES WITH INTERIOR
MINISTER

¶1. Summary: The Ambassador called on the Minister of Interior Paul Antoine Bien-Aime on June 22. They discussed the Minister's priorities, the deportation and rendition programs, and ways to further US-Haitian law enforcement and security collaboration. Bien-Aime stated that internal security, decentralization, immigration and migration, and functional democracy were his priorities. He would like to continue collaborative efforts in these areas, but urged the Ambassador to delay the current deportee program for one month to allow the ministries of interior and justice to review the program. End Summary.

¶2. Bien-Aime stated that security was at the top of the agenda for him and the new Preval administration. In light of security, he raised the question of deportees. Haiti will accept them back, he said, but the issue of deportees creates a special challenge for the GoH and that the ministries of interior and justice need time to prepare to implement the program. He relied on the often quoted but unsubstantiated theory that returned deportees come back to Haiti and resume their "professional criminal lifestyle," which created internal instability. The Ambassador acknowledged the minister's concerns but stressed the GoH's legal responsibility to accept its citizens. She noted that US law provided for visa sanctions if a country did not meet its legal obligations. Bien-Aime understood but asked for a one month delay before the next flight arrived in order to improve the re-entry process, concluding that &you have prisoners, but we have no prisons.⁸ He repeated that Haiti would accept the deportees, but the new government needs a little time to get all involved parties together in order to avoid the mistakes of last month's deportation flight. The Ambassador advised the minister that the program had been suspended before and stressed that she did not want this issue to become a point of debate in US/Haitian relations. The government must understand, she stressed, the great importance the USG attaches to resolving this issue now. Bien-Aime replied that he understood.

¶4. Bien-Aime told the Ambassador that his priorities were internal security, decentralization, immigration and migration, and functional democracy. He discussed stronger control along the Haitian-Dominican Republic border, continued co-operation with the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) and the Coast Guard, and economic development of border communities to reduce migration into the Dominican Republic.

¶ 15. The Ambassador agreed that US collaborative efforts were essential and would continue in the areas of drug enforcement and migration. She also mentioned the GoH's cooperation in the past on renditions. She noted that several individuals accused of kidnapping an American-citizen had been extradited to the United States. This cooperation was very important given that almost 30,000 Americans reside in Haiti.

¶ 16. The Ambassador concluding the meeting, stating that the GoH and the USG had the same objective: to create a stable, developed Haiti. Both promised to keep the lines of communication open and noted that their respective staffs were at the disposal of one another.

¶ 17. Biographical Information: Minister Bien-Aime was a former Minister of Education and believes that his role in the Ministry of Interior is similar to that in the Ministry of Education -- teaching Haitians how to be good citizens and respecting the rights of others. Although not a man of politics, Bien-Aime became interested in reform politics while working with the poor during the Duvalier era. He is a former priest who has been involved in the reform of the Haitian school system. He worked for the National Institute for Teaching Techniques under the Minister of National Education Josphéh Bernard, a key reformer of the Haitian educational system in the late 1970,s and 1980,s. The Bernard reform advocated teaching children in Creole, the native tongue of all Haitians and gradually introducing them to French (as a foreign language) through a series of special teaching techniques. Bien-Aime holds a PhD from the University of Montreal and was a student in France, where he

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studied sociology and psychology. The Minister has traveled to Miami and Nebraska for religious purposes. He is able to speak English. His fluency is unknown to the Embassy.

SANDERSON